

**The Law of the People's Republic of China on
Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress — More
Effectively Advancing the Protection and
Development of Equal Rights of Ethnic
Minorities in China**

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Introduction

It has always been the unwavering governance philosophy and consistent great practice of the Chinese Government to respect, safeguard, and develop the equal rights of ethnic minorities, as well as to promote the prosperity and development of ethnic minorities and ethnic regions. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, in order to effectively safeguard and develop the equal rights of ethnic minorities, the Chinese Government has formulated and implemented a series of laws and regulations, establishing a legal system that is cohesive and complementary, with the *Constitution* at its core and comprising laws, administrative regulations, and local regulations. These laws and regulations have effectively guaranteed equal, united, mutual-assistance-based, and harmonious ethnic relations in China, vigorously facilitated the progress, prosperity, and development of ethnic minorities, and continuously propelled the Chinese nation toward a community with a shared future characterized by stronger identity and greater cohesion.

On 12 March 2026, the Fourth Session of the Fourteenth National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China adopted the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress* (hereinafter referred to as the "*Promotion Law*"). This is a foundational and comprehensive law in the field of ethnic work introduced by the Chinese Government in the new era, marking a significant new step in the rule-of-law based governance of ethnic affairs.

The *Promotion Law* fully leverages the role of the rule of law in consolidating foundations, ensuring stable expectations, and delivering long-term benefits. For the first time, in the form of a fundamental law of the state, it not only makes legal provisions for promoting ethnic unity and progress, but also establishes comprehensive and systematic provisions for the protection and development of various categories of rights of ethnic minorities, including economic rights, social rights, cultural rights, civil and political rights, and environmental rights, as well as for promoting interaction, exchange, and integration among all ethnic groups and advancing the prosperity and development of ethnic minorities. It thereby constructs a legal framework for the protection of the equal rights of ethnic minorities that is comprehensive in scope, all-encompassing in coverage, and full in application, providing a solid legal foundation and strong rule-of-law safeguards for the protection and development of equal rights of ethnic minorities.

The *Promotion Law* adheres to the principle of combining flexible guidance with rigid constraints, translating the Chinese Government's firm resolve to safeguard and develop the equal rights of ethnic minorities into the conscious awareness and voluntary action of all citizens. Thereby, it better safeguards and develops the equal rights of ethnic minorities, promotes unity and progress among all ethnic groups, and advances the great solidarity of all ethnic groups in China.

The *Promotion Law*, in safeguarding and developing the equal rights of ethnic minorities in China, is no different from the commonly adopted

practices of other countries in promoting national ethnic unity and progress and safeguarding and developing the equal rights of ethnic minorities. It does not erode the equal rights of ethnic minorities; rather, it gives full play to the rule-of-law function of safeguarding those rights, further tightens the protection system for the equal rights of ethnic minorities through legal institutions, and safeguards those rights more fully and forcefully. In this sense, it constitutes a milestone in the international rule-of-law history of the protection of the equal rights of ethnic minorities.

The philosophy and practice of the *Promotion Law* in safeguarding and developing equal rights of ethnic minorities are fully consistent with the prevailing approaches of the international community. Grounded in China's fundamental national conditions, it employs systematic and comprehensive legislation to establish a rights protection framework covering economic, social, cultural, political, and other domains. Thereby, it has formulated a new scheme with Chinese characteristics for the legal protection of equal rights of ethnic minorities, providing useful legal references for the cause of safeguarding equal rights among all ethnic groups worldwide.

I. China Has Established a Systematic and Comprehensive Legal Framework for the Protection of Equal Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Government has consistently been committed to the legal protection of equal rights of ethnic minorities, and has established a legal safeguard system for such rights, with the *Constitution* as the fundamental basis, the *Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* as the mainstay, and individual laws and administrative regulations as complementary and cohesive components. This system is comprehensive in content and systematic in structure, laying a solid legal foundation for the protection and development of the equal rights of ethnic minorities.

(I) Legal Protection of Economic Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 4 of the *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, adopted in December 1982 by the Fifth National People's Congress and subsequently amended five times, stipulates: "The state shall assist ethnic minority regions in accelerating their economic and cultural development according to the characteristics and needs of the various ethnic minorities."^[1] Article 118 of the said *Law* provides: "The organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall, under the guidance of state plans, independently arrange for and manage local economic development undertakings. When the state exploits resources or establishes enterprises in ethnic autonomous areas, it shall take into account the interests of such

areas.”^[2] Article 122 stipulates: “The state shall provide financial, material, and technical assistance to the various ethnic minorities to accelerate their economic and cultural development.”^[3] These legal provisions, at the level of the national constitution, have clearly established the legal safeguards for the economic rights of ethnic minorities, and fully manifest the state will that attaches great importance to, shows deep concern and care for, and provides strong support to the protection of the economic rights of ethnic minorities and the economic development of ethnic regions.

Article 25 of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy*, adopted at the Second Session of the Sixth National People’s Congress on 31 May 1984 and amended at the Twentieth Session of the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People’s Congress on 28 February 2001, provides: “The organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall, under the guidance of state plans and in light of the characteristics and needs of their respective localities, formulate policies, principles and plans for economic development, and independently arrange for and administer local economic development undertakings.”^[4] Article 26 of the said *Law* stipulates: “The organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall, on the premise of adhering to the principles of socialism, and in accordance with the provisions of law and the characteristics of local economic development, rationally readjust the relations of production and the economic structure, and strive to develop the socialist market economy.”^[5] Article 32 provides: “The

finance of an ethnic autonomous area constitutes a level of fiscal administration and forms an integral part of state finance. The organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall have the power of autonomy in managing local finance. All fiscal revenues accruing to an ethnic autonomous area under the state fiscal system shall be arranged and utilized independently by the organs of self-government of that area. Under the unified state fiscal system, ethnic autonomous areas shall, through the standardized system of fiscal transfer payments implemented by the state, enjoy preferential treatment from superior-level fiscal authorities. The fiscal budget expenditures of ethnic autonomous areas shall, in accordance with state regulations, include contingency funds, and the proportion of reserve funds in the budget shall be higher than that of general areas. In the course of implementing their fiscal budgets, the organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall arrange and utilize on their own the surplus from over-collected revenues and the savings from expenditures.”

[6] Article 55 stipulates: “State organs at higher levels shall assist and guide the research, formulation and implementation of economic development strategies in ethnic autonomous areas, and shall assist such areas, through financial, monetary, material, technical and human resources support, in accelerating the development of economic, educational, scientific, technological, cultural, public health and sports undertakings. The state shall formulate preferential policies to channel and encourage domestic

and foreign investment into ethnic autonomous areas. When formulating plans for national economic and social development, state organs at higher levels shall take into account the characteristics and needs of ethnic autonomous areas.”^[7] Article 61 provides: “The state shall formulate preferential policies to support ethnic autonomous areas in developing foreign economic relations and trade, expand the autonomy of production enterprises in ethnic autonomous areas in foreign trade operations, encourage the export of products in which local areas enjoy competitive advantages, and implement preferential policies in respect of border trade.”

^[8]The *Regulations on the Administrative Work of Ethnic Townships*, approved by the State Council of the People’s Republic of China on 29 August 1993 and promulgated and put into effect by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission on 15 September of the same year, stipulate in Article 6: “The people’s governments of ethnic townships shall, in accordance with laws, regulations and relevant state provisions, and in light of the specific circumstances and ethnic characteristics of their respective townships, develop economic, educational, scientific, technological, cultural, public health and other undertakings in the light of local conditions.”^[9] Article 10 of the said *Regulations* provides: “Local people’s governments at or above the county level may, in accordance with the provisions of tax laws and regulations and within the limits of their tax administration authority, adopt tax reduction and exemption measures to

support the economic development of ethnic townships.”^[10] These legal provisions, which set forth more autonomous measures for promoting economic development than those applicable to non-ethnic autonomous areas—in such respects as state assistance to ethnic autonomous areas in economic development, fiscal autonomy and trade autonomy of ethnic autonomous areas, and fiscal preferences for ethnic autonomous areas—further manifest the state’s full support for and unwavering resolve to safeguard the economic rights of ethnic minorities and to promote the economic development of ethnic regions.

The *Regulations on Urban Ethnic Work*, approved by the State Council of the People’s Republic of China on 29 August 1993 and promulgated and put into effect by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People’s Republic of China on 15 September of the same year, provide in Article 5: “The people’s government of a city shall incorporate into its plan for national economic and social development such economic and cultural undertakings as are suited to the needs of the local ethnic minorities. The people’s government of a city may, to the extent permitted by its financial resources, give appropriate preferential consideration to funds for the development of economic and cultural undertakings that meet the needs of local ethnic minorities.”^[11] This constitutes a legal safeguard for the lawful rights and interests of ethnic minorities in urban areas, and demonstrates the state’s attention to and support for the protection of the

economic and other rights of ethnic minorities in the process of new-type urbanization.

Article 8 of the *Provisions of the State Council on Implementing the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy*, which took effect on 31 May 2005, stipulates: “The state shall, in accordance with the plan for economic and social development and the strategy for large-scale development of the western region, give priority to the arrangement of resource development and deep-processing projects in ethnic autonomous areas. Where petroleum, natural gas or other resources are exploited in ethnic autonomous areas, support shall be given to the local areas in promoting local economic development, developing corresponding service industries, and facilitating employment.”^[12] This constitutes an administrative regulation, promulgated at the level of the highest state administrative organ, for safeguarding the economic rights of ethnic minorities and developing the economy of ethnic regions, and demonstrates the state’s concern for, attention to, and assistance in the protection of the economic rights of ethnic minorities and the economic development of ethnic regions.

Article 2 of the *Measures for the Administration of the Development Funds for Ethnic Minorities*, jointly promulgated and put into effect by the Ministry of Finance of the People’s Republic of China and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission on 10 March 2006, provides: “The development funds

for ethnic minorities are special funds established by the central government finance for the purpose of supporting impoverished ethnic minority areas in advancing the action of revitalizing border areas and enriching their inhabitants, assisting the development of ethnic minority groups with smaller populations, and improving the production and living conditions of ethnic minorities. They constitute an integral part of the central government's poverty alleviation funds.”^[13] This demonstrates that as early as 2006, the state established development funds for ethnic minorities to support the development of ethnic minorities, particularly those with smaller populations, and to improve the production and living conditions of ethnic minorities and ethnic regions, thereby highlighting the state’s special care for ethnic minorities and its strong support for the economic development of ethnic regions.

Article 2 of the *Measures for the Administration of Interest Subsidies on Loans for Ethnic Trade and the Production of Ethnic Specialty Commodities*, jointly issued by the Ministry of Finance of the People’s Republic of China, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the People’s Bank of China on 31 May 2022, provides: “For the purposes of these Measures, the interest subsidies on loans for ethnic trade and ethnic specialty commodities refer to the subsidized interest grants provided by the state to enterprises engaged in ethnic trade and enterprises designated for the production of ethnic specialty commodities (hereinafter collectively

referred to as ‘ethnic trade and ethnic specialty commodity enterprises’) for their working capital loans used in the conduct of ethnic trade and the production of ethnic specialty commodities, in order to meet the production and living needs of ethnic minority populations, promote trade development in ethnic regions, and ensure the supply of ethnic specialty commodities.” ^[14] This demonstrates that the state’s provision of interest subsidies on working capital loans for ethnic trade and the production of ethnic specialty commodities constitutes, in effect, support in the field of financial policy for the protection of the economic rights of ethnic minorities and for the economic development of ethnic regions.

(II) Legal Protection of Social Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 12 of the *Labor Law of the People’s Republic of China*, adopted at the Eighth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People’s Congress on 5 July 1994 and subsequently amended on two occasions, provides: “In employment, workers shall not be discriminated against on grounds of ethnicity, race, sex, or religious belief.” ^[15] This constitutes a legal provision for the equal enjoyment of the right to work by ethnic minorities, and legally affirms the equal right to work of ethnic minorities.

Article 23 of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy*, adopted at the Second Session of the Sixth National People’s Congress on 31 May 1984 and amended at the Twentieth Session

of the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People's Congress on 28 February 2001, provides: "When recruiting personnel in accordance with state provisions, enterprises and public institutions in ethnic autonomous areas shall give priority to recruiting personnel from among ethnic minorities, and may recruit from among the ethnic minority populations in rural and pastoral areas." ^[16] This reflects the state's support policies for the employment of ethnic minorities.

Article 27 of the *Provisions of the State Council on Implementing the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy*, which took effect on 31 May 2005, stipulates: "The people's government at a higher level shall, in accordance with relevant state provisions, assist ethnic autonomous areas in accelerating the establishment of a social security system, establish and improve old-age, unemployment, medical, work-related injury, and maternity insurance systems, as well as the system of minimum subsistence allowances for urban and rural residents, and form a social security system compatible with the level of local economic and social development." ^[17] This demonstrates the state's great emphasis on and strong support for the development of social security in ethnic regions.

Article 52 of the *Traditional Chinese Medicine Law of the People's Republic of China*, adopted and promulgated at the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress on 25 December 2016 and effective as of 1 July 2017, provides: "The state

shall take measures to increase support for the inheritance, innovation, application, development, and personnel training of ethnic minority medicine, strengthen the development of ethnic minority medical institutions and the ranks of physicians, and promote and regulate the development of ethnic minority medicine.”^[18] This reflects the state’s concern for and support of the development of ethnic minority medicine, which in essence constitutes a safeguard for the health rights of ethnic minorities.

Article 61 of the said *Law* provides: “Ethnic autonomous areas may, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* and this *Law*, and in light of actual local conditions, formulate measures to promote and regulate the development of ethnic minority medicine in their respective localities.”^[19] This demonstrates that the state, through law, ensures that ethnic autonomous areas exercise their autonomy and self-determination in promoting the development of ethnic minority medicine within their regions.

(III) Legal Protection of Cultural Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 4 of the *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China* provides: “All ethnic groups shall have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and the freedom to preserve or reform their own customs and habits.”^[20] This constitutes a constitutional

affirmation of the right of ethnic minorities to use and develop their own ethnic spoken and written languages.

Article 22 of the *Provisions of the State Council on Implementing the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* stipulates: "The state shall guarantee the freedom of all ethnic groups to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and shall support the standardization, systematization, and information processing of the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities."^[21] Article 9 of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language*, adopted at the Eighteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People's Congress on 31 October 2000 and revised at the Nineteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Fourteenth National People's Congress on 27 December 2025, provides: "All ethnic groups shall have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages. The use of the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities shall be governed by the *Constitution*, the *Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy*, and other relevant laws."^[22] These constitute administrative regulations promulgated by the state to support, safeguard, and promote the use and development of the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities.

Article 10 of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* provides: "The organs of self-government of ethnic

autonomous areas shall guarantee that all ethnic groups in their respective localities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and the freedom to preserve or reform their own customs and habits.” ^[23] Article 21 of the said *Law* provides: “In the performance of their functions, the organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall, in accordance with the provisions of the autonomous regulations of their respective ethnic autonomous areas, use one or several spoken and written languages commonly used in the locality. Where several commonly used spoken and written languages are used simultaneously in the performance of official functions, the spoken and written language of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy may be given priority.” ^[24] Article 47 provides: “The people’s courts and people’s procuratorates in ethnic autonomous areas shall hear cases and conduct prosecutorial work in the language commonly used in the locality, and shall rationally equip themselves with personnel proficient in the commonly used spoken and written languages of the local ethnic minorities. Translation shall be provided for participants in litigation who are not proficient in the commonly used spoken and written language of the locality. Legal documents shall, in light of actual needs, be prepared in one or several scripts commonly used in the locality, so as to ensure that citizens of all ethnic groups have the right to use their own spoken and written languages in litigation proceedings.” ^[25] Article 15 of the

Implementing Guidelines for Regional Ethnic Autonomy of the People's Republic of China provides: "The organs of self-government of each ethnic autonomous area may adopt one of the ethnic scripts commonly used in that area as the principal instrument for the exercise of their official functions. When exercising official functions with respect to ethnic groups that do not use that script, the script of such ethnic groups shall be adopted simultaneously." [26] Article 16 provides: "The organs of self-government of each ethnic autonomous area may adopt the respective spoken and written languages of all ethnic groups in order to develop the cultural and educational undertakings of all ethnic groups." [27] These provisions, at the national level, provide a legal safeguard for all ethnic groups and the organs of self-government in ethnic autonomous areas to use and develop their own ethnic spoken and written languages. They demonstrate that the organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas possess the autonomous authority to guarantee that all ethnic groups in their respective localities, including ethnic minorities, may use and develop their own spoken and written languages, preserve or reform their own customs and habits, and use ethnic minority spoken and written languages in the performance of official functions.

Article 9 of the *Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China*, adopted at the Second Session of the Fifth National People's Congress on 1 July 1979, effective as of 1 January 1980, and subsequently

revised on three occasions—17 March 1996, 14 March 2012, and 26 October 2018—provides: “Citizens of all ethnic groups shall have the right to use their own spoken and written languages in litigation proceedings. The people’s courts, people’s procuratorates, and public security organs shall provide translation for participants in litigation who are not proficient in the commonly used spoken and written language of the locality. In areas inhabited by ethnic minorities in concentrated communities or in areas where several ethnic groups live together, interrogation shall be conducted in the language commonly used in the locality, and judgments, notices, and other documents shall be issued in the script commonly used in the locality.”

[28] This constitutes a legal safeguard for citizens of all ethnic groups, including ethnic minorities, to use their own spoken and written languages in criminal litigation proceedings.

Article 9 of the *Administrative Procedure Law of the People’s Republic of China*, adopted at the Second Session of the Seventh National People’s Congress on 4 April 1989, and subsequently amended on two occasions—1 November 2014 and 27 June 2017—provides: “Citizens of all ethnic groups shall have the right to use their own spoken and written languages in administrative litigation proceedings. In areas inhabited by ethnic minorities in concentrated communities or in areas where several ethnic groups live together, the people’s courts shall conduct hearings and issue legal documents in the spoken and written language commonly used

by the local ethnic groups. The people's courts shall provide translation for participants in litigation who are not proficient in the commonly used spoken and written language of the local ethnic groups.” [29] This constitutes a legal safeguard for citizens of all ethnic groups, including ethnic minorities, to use their own spoken and written languages in administrative litigation proceedings.

Article 24 of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* provides: “The people's government at a higher level shall support the development of cultural undertakings of ethnic minorities in ethnic autonomous areas through policies and financial input, strengthen the construction of cultural infrastructure, give priority support to public-interest cultural undertakings of ethnic forms and characteristics, enhance the development of the public cultural service system in ethnic autonomous areas, and cultivate and develop the ethnic cultural industry. The state shall support the development of the press and publishing industry of ethnic minorities, ensure the dubbing, production, and broadcasting of radio, film, and television programs in ethnic minority languages, and support the translation and publication of publications in ethnic minority languages. The state shall attach importance to the inheritance and development of the fine traditional culture of ethnic minorities, regularly hold traditional ethnic minority sports games and ethnic minority theatrical performances, enrich the creation of ethnic literature and art, and enrich the cultural life of the

people of all ethnic groups.”^[30] This demonstrates that the state has, through law, provided that it shall support the development of cultural undertakings of ethnic minorities in ethnic autonomous areas through policies and financial input.

Article 38 of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* provides: “The organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall independently develop ethnic cultural undertakings of ethnic forms and characteristics, including literature, art, press and publishing, broadcasting, film, and television, increase investment in cultural undertakings, strengthen the construction of cultural facilities, and accelerate the development of all types of cultural undertakings. The organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall organize and support relevant entities and departments to collect, collate, translate, and publish books on ethnic history and culture, protect places of historic and cultural interest, valuable cultural relics, and other important historical and cultural heritage of ethnic groups, and inherit and develop the fine traditional ethnic culture.”^[31] This demonstrates that the state has, through law, provided that the organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas possess the autonomous authority to develop ethnic cultural undertakings in their respective localities, which constitutes a legal safeguard for the cultural rights of ethnic minorities.

Article 10 of the *Education Law of the People’s Republic of China*,

adopted at the Third Session of the Eighth National People's Congress on 18 March 1995 and subsequently amended on three occasions, provides: "The state shall, in accordance with the characteristics and needs of the various ethnic minorities, assist the various ethnic minority areas in developing educational undertakings." ^[32] Article 57 of the said *Law* provides: "The State Council and local people's governments at or above the county level shall establish special funds for education, with priority given to supporting compulsory education in remote, impoverished areas and ethnic minority areas."^[33] This demonstrates that the state has, through law, provided for assistance and support to ethnic regions in developing educational undertakings, which constitutes a legal safeguard for the right to education of ethnic minorities.

Article 6 of the *Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of the People's Republic of China*, adopted at the Nineteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress on 25 February 2011, provides: "The state shall support the protection and preservation of intangible cultural heritage in ethnic regions, border areas, and impoverished areas." ^[34] Article 8 of the *Sports Law of the People's Republic of China*, adopted at the Fifteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People's Congress on 29 August 1995 and subsequently amended on three occasions, provides: "The state shall encourage and support the exploration, collation, protection, promotion,

and innovation of outstanding traditional sports events of ethnic, folk, and popular origin, and shall regularly hold traditional ethnic minority sports games.”^[35] Article 43 of the *Film Industry Promotion Law of the People’s Republic of China*, adopted at the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People’s Congress on 7 November 2016, provides: “The state shall take measures to support the conduct of film activities in rural areas, border areas, impoverished areas, and ethnic regions. The state shall encourage and support the creation of films on ethnic minority subjects, strengthen the dubbing and translation of films into ethnic minority languages, and make overall arrangements to ensure the needs of the people in ethnic regions for watching films.”^[36] These provisions demonstrate that the state supports the protection of the intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minorities, the inheritance and preservation of traditional ethnic minority sports, and the creation of films on ethnic minority subjects.

(IV) Legal Protection of Civil Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 13 of the *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*^[37] provides: “The lawful private property of citizens shall not be infringed upon. The state shall protect the right of citizens to private property and the right of inheritance in accordance with law.” Article 37 of the said *Constitution* provides: “The personal freedom of citizens of the People’s Republic of China shall not be infringed upon. No citizen shall be arrested

except with the approval or decision of a people's procuratorate or the decision of a people's court, and in both cases such arrest shall be executed by a public security organ. Unlawful detention, and unlawful deprivation or restriction of citizens' personal freedom by other means, shall be prohibited. Unlawful search of citizens' persons shall be prohibited" Article 38 provides: "The personal dignity of citizens of the People's Republic of China shall not be infringed upon. Insult, libel, false accusation, or false incrimination directed against citizens by any means shall be prohibited." Article 39 provides: "The homes of citizens of the People's Republic of China shall not be infringed upon. Unlawful search of, or unlawful intrusion into, the homes of citizens shall be prohibited." Article 40 provides: "The freedom and confidentiality of correspondence of citizens of the People's Republic of China shall be protected by law. No organization or individual shall, on any ground, infringe upon citizens' freedom and confidentiality of correspondence, except in cases where, for the purposes of national security or criminal investigation, public security organs or procuratorial organs may inspect correspondence in accordance with the procedures prescribed by law." The term "citizens" as used herein refers to all Chinese citizens, including citizens of ethnic minorities, and constitutes a constitutional guarantee for the protection of the property rights, personal freedom, personal dignity, inviolability of the home, and freedom and confidentiality of correspondence of ethnic minorities.

Article 25 of the *Implementing Guidelines for Regional Ethnic Autonomy of the People's Republic of China* provides: “The organs of self-government of each ethnic autonomous area shall ensure that all ethnic groups within the area enjoy the right of ethnic equality; educate the people of all ethnic groups to respect each other's spoken and written languages, customs and habits, and religious beliefs; prohibit discrimination and oppression among ethnic groups; and prohibit any act that instigates ethnic disputes.” ^[38]Article 6 of the *Decision of the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government on Ensuring the Enjoyment of the Right to Ethnic Equality by Members of All Scattered Ethnic Minorities*, adopted at the 125th Meeting of the State Council of the People's Republic of China on 22 February 1952, provides: “Members of all scattered ethnic minorities who suffer from ethnic discrimination, oppression, or insult shall have the right to lodge complaints with the people's government. People's governments at all levels shall be responsible for handling such complaints; where acts of discrimination, oppression, or insult are of a serious nature, they shall be punished in accordance with law.” ^[39] These are provisions for the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities to enjoy civil rights free from discrimination.

Article 250 of the current *Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China*, which was revised on 14 March 1997, effective as of 1 October 1997, and subsequently amended on twelve occasions, provides: “Where

any content that discriminates against or insults an ethnic minority is published in a publication, if the circumstances are flagrant and serious consequences have resulted, the persons directly responsible shall be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of not more than three years, criminal detention, or public surveillance.”^[40] Article 251 of the said *Law* provides: “Where any state functionary unlawfully deprives citizens of their freedom of religious belief or infringes upon the customs and habits of ethnic minorities, if the circumstances are serious, he or she shall be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of not more than two years or criminal detention.”^[41] These are criminal law provisions for the punishment of acts that involve the publication of content that discriminates against or insults ethnic minorities, as well as acts by state functionaries that infringe upon the customs and habits of ethnic minorities.

(V) Legal Protection of Political Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 34 of the *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* provides: “All citizens of the People's Republic of China who have reached the age of eighteen shall have the right to vote and stand for election, regardless of ethnicity, race, sex, occupation, family background, religious belief, education level, property status, or length of residence, except persons deprived of political rights in accordance with law.”^[42] Article 2 of the *Decision of the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government on Ensuring the Enjoyment of the Right to Ethnic*

Equality by Members of All Scattered Ethnic Minorities provides: “Members of all scattered ethnic minorities shall, in accordance with law, enjoy the right to vote and stand for election.” ^[43] These provisions demonstrate that all ethnic minority citizens who possess Chinese nationality, have reached the age of eighteen, and have not been lawfully deprived of political rights—whether living in concentrated communities or in scattered communities—shall enjoy the full right to vote and stand for election in accordance with law. The political rights of scattered ethnic minorities are thus affirmed and guaranteed by law.

The Preamble of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* ^[44] provides: “Regional ethnic autonomy means that, under the unified leadership of the state, regional autonomy is practiced in areas where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities; in these areas, organs of self-government are established for the exercise of the power of autonomy. The practice of regional ethnic autonomy fully reflects the spirit of the state’s full respect for and guarantee of the right of the ethnic minorities to manage their own internal affairs, and embodies the principle of the state’s adherence to equality, unity and mutual assistance among all ethnic groups.” Article 12 of the said *Law* provides: “In areas where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities, autonomous areas may be established on the basis of one or several ethnic minority concentrated communities, taking into account

local conditions such as the relationships among ethnic groups and economic development, as well as historical circumstances. In areas where other ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities within an ethnic autonomous area, corresponding autonomous areas or ethnic townships shall be established.” These provisions guarantee the right of ethnic minorities to establish autonomous areas and to institute organs of self-government.

Article 59 of the *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China* ^[45] provides: “The National People’s Congress shall be composed of deputies elected from the provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government, special administrative regions, and the armed forces. All ethnic minorities shall have an appropriate number of deputies.” Article 113 of the said *Constitution* provides: “In the people’s congresses of autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures, and autonomous counties, in addition to the deputies of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy, other ethnic groups residing in the administrative area shall also have an appropriate number of deputies. The standing committee of the people’s congress of an autonomous region, an autonomous prefecture, or an autonomous county shall have a citizen of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy as its chairman or vice-chairman.” Article 114 provides: “The chairman of an autonomous region, the prefect of an autonomous prefecture, or the head of an autonomous

county shall be a citizen of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy.”

Article 16 of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* ^[46] provides: “In the people’s congresses of ethnic autonomous areas, in addition to the deputies of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy, other ethnic groups residing in the administrative area shall also have an appropriate number of deputies.” Article 17 of the said Law provides: “The chairman of an autonomous region, the prefect of an autonomous prefecture, or the head of an autonomous county shall be a citizen of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy. Other members of the people’s government of an autonomous region, an autonomous prefecture, or an autonomous county shall be rationally staffed with personnel from the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy and other ethnic minorities.” Article 18 provides: “Among the cadres in the working departments under the organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas, personnel from the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy and other ethnic minorities shall be rationally staffed.” All the above provisions constitute legal safeguards to ensure that ethnic minorities have deputies at all levels of the people’s congresses.

Article 4 of the *Electoral Law of the People’s Republic of China for the National People’s Congress and Local People’s Congresses* ^[47], adopted at the Second Session of the Fifth National People’s Congress on 1 July 1979 and subsequently amended on seven occasions, provides: “All

citizens of the People's Republic of China who have reached the age of eighteen shall have the right to vote and stand for election, regardless of ethnicity, race, sex, occupation, family background, religious belief, education level, property status, or length of residence.” Article 18 of the said *Law* provides: “In areas where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities, each ethnic minority in that concentrated community shall have its own deputies to the local people's congress. Where the total population of a particular ethnic minority in a concentrated community accounts for more than 30 percent of the total population of that area, the population represented by each deputy of that minority shall be equivalent to the population represented by each deputy of the local people's congress. Where the total population of a particular ethnic minority in a concentrated community accounts for less than 15 percent of the total population of that area, the population represented by each deputy of that minority may be appropriately less than the population represented by each deputy of the local people's congress, but shall not be less than one-half thereof; in the case of an autonomous county where the population of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy is particularly small, the population represented by each deputy may be less than one-half, subject to the decision of the standing committee of the people's congress of the province or autonomous region. Other ethnic groups living in concentrated communities with particularly small populations shall each have at least

one deputy. Where the total population of a particular ethnic minority in a concentrated community accounts for 15 percent or more but less than 30 percent of the total population of that area, the population represented by each deputy of that minority may be appropriately less than the population represented by each deputy of the local people's congress, provided that the number of deputies allocated to that minority shall not exceed 30 percent of the total number of deputies.”

Article 12 of the *Organic Law of the Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments of the People's Republic of China*, adopted at the Second Session of the Fifth National People's Congress on 1 July 1979, promulgated on 4 July 1979, effective as of 1 January 1980, and subsequently amended on six occasions, provides: “When exercising their functions and powers, the people's congresses of townships, ethnic townships, and towns where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities may, in accordance with the limits of authority prescribed by law, take specific measures suited to the ethnic characteristics of the locality.”^[48] This constitutes a constitutional provision for the autonomous exercise of functions and powers by the primary-level people's congresses in areas where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities. Article 19 of the said *Law* provides: “For the election of deputies from other ethnic minorities and from the Han ethnic group living in concentrated communities within the areas under the jurisdiction of autonomous regions,

autonomous prefectures, autonomous counties, and townships, ethnic townships, and towns where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities, the provisions of Article 18 of this *Law* shall apply.” Article 20 of the said *Law* provides: “For deputies to the local people’s congresses elected from scattered ethnic minorities, the population represented by each deputy may be less than the population represented by each deputy of the local people’s congress. With respect to the election of deputies from other scattered ethnic minorities and from the Han ethnic group to the people’s congresses of autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures, autonomous counties, and townships, ethnic townships, and towns where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities, the provisions of the preceding paragraph shall apply.” Article 21 of the said *Law* provides: “In cities not divided into districts, municipal districts, counties, townships, ethnic townships, and towns where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities, the deputies to the people’s congresses shall be elected by the voters of the various ethnic minorities either separately or jointly, in light of the local ethnic relationships and residential conditions. With respect to the methods of election of deputies from other ethnic minorities and from the Han ethnic group residing within the areas under the jurisdiction of autonomous counties and townships, ethnic townships, and towns where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities, the provisions of the preceding paragraph shall apply.” All the above

provisions constitute legal safeguards to ensure that people's congresses at all levels have deputies from ethnic minorities.

Article 26 of the *Implementing Guidelines for Regional Ethnic Autonomy of the People's Republic of China* provides: "The organs of self-government of each ethnic autonomous area shall ensure that all people within the area, regardless of their ethnic status, enjoy the freedoms of thought, speech, publication, assembly, association, correspondence, person, residence, movement, religious belief, and demonstration, as prescribed in the *Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference*, and shall have the right to vote and stand for election in accordance with law." [49] Article 1 of the *Decision of the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government on Ensuring the Enjoyment of the Right to Ethnic Equality by Members of All Scattered Ethnic Minorities*, adopted at the 125th Meeting of the State Council of the People's Republic of China on 22 February 1952, provides: "The people who are members of all scattered ethnic minorities shall enjoy, on an equal footing with the local Han people, the freedoms of thought, speech, publication, assembly, association, correspondence, person, residence, movement, religious belief, and demonstration, and no one shall discriminate against them." [50] These are constitutional and administrative safeguards for the political rights of ethnic minorities.

(VI) Legal Protection of Environmental Rights of Ethnic

Minorities

Article 66 of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* provides: "Where ethnic autonomous areas make contributions to the ecological balance and environmental protection of the state, the state shall grant them certain economic compensation. When any organization or individual exploits resources or undertakes construction in ethnic autonomous areas, they shall take effective measures to protect and improve the local living environment and ecological environment, and to prevent and control pollution and other public hazards."^[51] Article 8 of the *Forest Law of the People's Republic of China*, adopted at the Seventh Session of the Standing Committee of the Sixth National People's Congress on 20 September 1984 and subsequently amended on three occasions, provides: "The State Council and the people's governments of provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government may, in accordance with the state's provisions on the autonomous powers of ethnic autonomous areas, implement more preferential policies for the protection of forests and the development of forestry in ethnic autonomous areas."^[52] These are legal provisions of the state concerning the protection of the ecological environment in ethnic autonomous areas.

Article 27 of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy*^[53] provides: "The organs of self-government of ethnic

autonomous areas shall, in accordance with law, determine the ownership and right of use of grasslands and forests within their respective localities. The organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall protect and develop grasslands and forests, and organize and encourage afforestation and grass-planting. No organization or individual shall be permitted to damage grasslands or forests by any means. The destruction of grasslands or forests for the purpose of land reclamation shall be strictly prohibited.” Article 28 provides: “The organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall, in accordance with law, manage and protect the natural resources within their respective localities. The organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall, in accordance with law and the unified planning of the state, give priority to the rational development and utilization of natural resources that may be exploited locally.” Article 45 provides: “The organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas shall protect and improve the living environment and ecological environment, prevent and control pollution and other public hazards, and achieve coordinated development of population, resources, and the environment.” These are legal safeguards for the organs of self-government of ethnic autonomous areas in exercising their environmental rights.

II. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress More Effectively Advances the Protection and Development of Equal Rights of Ethnic Minorities

The *Promotion Law* systematically consolidates the provisions for safeguarding equal rights of ethnic minorities that were previously dispersed across various Chinese laws and administrative regulations, and establishes a legal framework covering the protection of all categories of rights of ethnic minorities. The *Promotion Law* represents the most systematic and comprehensive legal provision to date for the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities, and constitutes a historic contribution to the safeguarding of equal rights of ethnic minorities in China.

(I) More Effectively Advancing Legal Protection of Economic Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 34 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “The state supports ethnic regions in leveraging their own advantages, in serving the development of a new pattern of development that takes domestic circulation as the mainstay and features positive interplay between domestic and international dual circulations, and in deeply integrating into the high-quality joint construction of the ‘Belt and Road’.” Article 35 of the said *Law* provides: “The relevant departments under the State Council and local people's governments at or above the county level shall strengthen the

construction of infrastructure in transportation, energy, water conservancy, information, and logistics, and promote connectivity between ethnic regions and other regions.” Article 36 provides: “Support shall be given to ethnic regions in fully playing their role in optimizing the layout of regional industrial chains and supply chains and in advancing the development of a unified national market. The relevant departments under the State Council and local people’s governments at or above the county level shall support ethnic regions in, on the basis of their resource endowments and by utilizing modern science and technology, developing agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishery, as well as agricultural and sideline product processing, textile, cultural tourism, and other characteristic and superior industries, including traditional crafts and traditional medicine; developing and strengthening new types of rural collective economies; and advancing comprehensive rural revitalization and integrated urban-rural development.”

(II) More Effectively Advancing Legal Protection of Social Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 23 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “Local people’s governments at or above the county level shall, in light of local conditions, improve friendly, inclusive, and integrative policy measures for urban ethnic work. Local people’s governments at all levels shall, in accordance with local actual circumstances, adopt specific measures in such areas as

urban and rural development, population management, housing policies, employment and entrepreneurship, and social services, so as to promote unity and integration among all ethnic groups. Local people's governments at all levels shall organize and guide people of all ethnic groups to participate together in community development, community governance, and community activities, support relevant entities and organizations in providing social services, and promote harmonious cohabitation and integration among people of all ethnic groups." This constitutes a legal measure to ensure that ethnic minorities are genuinely integrated into cities in the process of new-type urbanization. Article 39 provides: "The relevant departments under the State Council and local people's governments at or above the county level in border areas shall strengthen the construction of town systems along the border, improve development and opening-up policies, advance the construction of development and opening-up platforms and industrial platform facilities, enhance industrial support capacity, support border trade, develop border tourism, and encourage cross-border economic cooperation." These provisions fully demonstrate the state's resolve and will to support the high-quality economic development of ethnic minorities and ethnic regions, and constitute, on the new journey of the new era, more comprehensive legal safeguards for the economic rights of ethnic minorities.

Article 24 of the *Promotion Law* provides: "People's governments at

or above the county level shall strengthen the joint construction of service platforms and the sharing of information concerning population mobility between ethnic regions and between ethnic regions and other regions, enhance coordination capacity, and raise the level of facilitation in cross-regional government services.” Article 25 provides: “People’s governments at or above the county level shall, in accordance with law, protect the lawful rights and interests of citizens who are employed or start businesses across regions between ethnic regions and between ethnic regions and other regions... and provide services such as vocational guidance and job placement.” These constitute a legal safeguard for the rights of ethnic minority citizens to engage in cross-regional free movement, and to pursue employment and entrepreneurship on a fully voluntary, autonomous, and dignified basis.

Article 26 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “The education administrative department under the State Council and people’s governments at the provincial level shall support two-way cross-regional student enrollment between institutions of higher learning in ethnic regions and those in other regions, and strengthen collaboration in personnel training. The education administrative department under the State Council and local people’s governments at or above the county level shall encourage and support exchanges among teachers from ethnic regions and other regions. Schools at all levels and of various types, as well as other

educational institutions, shall, in light of the characteristics of their respective schools and students, promote the shared learning, shared living, and shared growth and progress of students of all ethnic groups.” Article 37 provides: “The relevant departments under the State Council and local people's governments at or above the county level shall promote the rational allocation of public service resources in such areas as employment, education, and medical care, enhance the balance and accessibility of basic public services, promote the coordinated development of education of various types and at various levels in ethnic regions, and improve the capacity of ethnic regions to guarantee public services.” These are provisions for promoting exchanges, interaction, and integration between teachers of ethnic minorities in ethnic regions and teachers from other regions, and for the coordinated development of educational undertakings in ethnic regions. They will inevitably further promote the protection and development of the right to education of ethnic minority adolescents.

Article 40 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “The state protects the freedom of marriage of citizens. No organization or individual shall, on grounds of ethnic identity, customs and habits, religious belief, or the like, interfere with the freedom of marriage.” Article 59 provides: “Where any organization or individual, on grounds of ethnic identity, commits employment discrimination, refuses to provide commodities or services, or commits other discriminatory acts prohibited by laws and regulations, the

relevant departments in charge, such as the ethnic affairs, human resources and social security, and market regulation departments at or above the county level, shall, in accordance with their respective functions, order the rectification of such acts; where adverse consequences or effects have resulted, a warning or a circular of criticism shall be given. Where laws and regulations provide otherwise for penalties, such provisions shall apply.” These are provisions for the protection of the right to marital autonomy of citizens, including ethnic minorities, and for the rectification of discriminatory acts against ethnic minorities in employment and services. In essence, they constitute legal safeguards for the rights of ethnic minorities to marital autonomy and to free and equal labor.

(III) More Effectively Advancing Legal Protection of Cultural Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 13 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “People’s governments at all levels shall strengthen the exploration, protection, and rational utilization of various types of cultural resources, including cultural relics and historic sites, traditional architecture, renowned cities, towns, and villages, historical districts, traditional villages, and intangible cultural heritage.” Article 15 provides: “The state respects and guarantees the learning and use of the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities, promotes the standardization, systematization, and informatization of the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities, and supports the

protection, collation, research, and utilization of ancient books of ethnic minorities.” Article 29 provides: “The state enhances mutual appreciation and integration of the cultures of all ethnic groups, and encourages all ethnic groups to appreciate each other's fine traditional cultures and to learn each other's spoken and written languages.” These provisions further provide legal safeguards for the rights of ethnic minorities with respect to cultural relics, ancient books, and languages.

(IV) More Effectively Advancing Legal Protection of Civil Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 5 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “All citizens of the People’s Republic of China are equal before the law. All ethnic groups of the People's Republic of China are equal. Discrimination and oppression against any ethnic group are prohibited.” This constitutes a legal safeguard for the equal rights of all ethnic groups, including ethnic minorities, and represents a legal prohibition of ethnic discrimination.

Article 6 provides: “The state adheres to enhancing commonalities while respecting and accommodating differences, promotes mutual assistance and harmonious coexistence among all ethnic groups, and upholds the great unity of the Chinese nation.” This constitutes a legal recognition of the distinctive characteristics of ethnic groups, and manifests the correct stance, attitude, and will of the present stage with respect to ethnic differences.

Article 9 provides: “The state adheres to governing ethnic affairs in accordance with law, protects the lawful rights and interests of people of all ethnic groups in accordance with law, strengthens the publicity and education of the Constitution and laws, enhances the sense of statehood, citizenship, and rule of law among people of all ethnic groups, upholds the unity, dignity, and authority of the socialist rule of law, and advances the modernization of the system and capacity for governance of ethnic affairs on the track of the rule of law.” This brings the governance of ethnic affairs onto the track of the rule of law, and constitutes the latest practice of the rule of law in the ethnic field.

(V) More Effectively Advancing Legal Protection of Political Rights of Ethnic Minorities

The Preamble of the *Promotion Law* provides: “Ensuring that people of all ethnic groups truly obtain equal political rights, jointly become masters of the country, and achieve unity and joint effort among all ethnic groups for common prosperity and development.” This is a legal provision for the protection of the political rights of citizens of all ethnic groups, including ethnic minorities.

Article 8 provides: “The state adheres to and improves the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and safeguards national unity and ethnic solidarity.” This is a legal provision which, under the unified leadership of the state, ensures that regional autonomy is practiced in areas where ethnic

minorities live in concentrated communities, that organs of self-government are established, and that the power of autonomy is exercised. The system of regional ethnic autonomy in China is one of the core components of the correct path for solving ethnic issues with Chinese characteristics, and is also a basic political system of China. It effectively safeguards the right of ethnic minorities to manage their own affairs, and constitutes a fundamental and emblematic institution for the protection of the political rights of ethnic minorities.

Article 49 provides: “The construction of a contingent of cadres in ethnic regions shall be strengthened, and importance shall be attached to the cultivation and employment of cadres from ethnic minorities. The state supports the cultivation of specialized technical personnel and highly skilled personnel in ethnic regions, promotes exchanges of cadres and personnel between ethnic regions and between ethnic regions and other regions, and guides the flow of cadres and personnel toward the grassroots level in ethnic regions.” This is a legal provision that further strengthens the construction of the contingent of cadres from ethnic minorities and the pool of personnel in ethnic regions, effectively safeguards the joint participation of ethnic minorities in governing the country, and promotes their participation in the administration of state and local affairs.

(VI) More Effectively Advancing Legal Protection of Environmental Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 38 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “The relevant departments under the State Council and local people’s governments at or above the county level shall make overall plans for the optimization of spatial layouts for agriculture, ecology, urban development, and other categories, strengthen the protection of the ecological environment and the sustainable utilization of natural resources in ethnic regions, and guide people of all ethnic groups to jointly safeguard the ecological space for the sustainable development of the Chinese nation.” This is a legal provision for the protection of the ecological environment and the sustainable utilization of natural resources in ethnic regions, and will surely provide effective legal safeguards for the environmental rights of ethnic minorities.

III. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress Is Highly Consistent with International Human Rights Instruments and Standards

China is an active participant, builder, and contributor to the international human rights cause. It has taken an active part in the development of the international human rights legal system and has faithfully fulfilled its international human rights obligations. As of May 2026, China has ratified or acceded to 29 international human rights instruments, including 6 core United Nations human rights treaties.

The *Promotion Law* connects domestic legal practice with international human rights norms, aligning itself with the principles of equality and non-discrimination, as well as the provisions on the economic rights, social rights, cultural rights, civil and political rights, environmental rights, and emerging rights of minorities as established in international human rights instruments and standards. It fully conforms to the standards of international human rights instruments and standards in terms of value orientation, practical requirements, and long-term objectives, thereby representing the latest rule-of-law action by China in actively implementing international human rights instruments and standards.

(I) Highly Consistent with the Provisions of International Human Rights Instruments and Standards on Safeguarding Economic Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 32 of the Promotion Law provides: “The state shall implement the new development philosophy, support ethnic regions in comprehensively deepening reform and opening-up, fully integrating into national development strategies, and enhancing their capacity for self-development, accelerate the high-quality development of ethnic regions, promote common prosperity among all ethnic groups, and advance the common march of all ethnic groups toward socialist modernization.” Article 34 provides: “The state shall support ethnic regions in, in accordance with the functional positioning of their respective regions, coordinating development and security, and in assuming their missions and responsibilities and fully playing their roles in safeguarding national border security, resource and energy security, food security, and ecological security. The state supports ethnic regions in leveraging their own advantages, in serving the development of a new pattern of development that takes domestic circulation as the mainstay and features positive interplay between domestic and international dual circulations, and in deeply integrating into the high-quality joint construction of the ‘Belt and Road’.” Article 35 provides: “The relevant departments under the State Council and local people’s governments at or above the county level shall strengthen the construction of infrastructure in transportation, energy, water conservancy, information, and logistics, and promote

connectivity between ethnic regions and other regions.” Article 36 provides: “The state shall build a modernized industrial system, develop new quality productive forces in light of local conditions, promote in an orderly manner the establishment of mechanisms for inter-regional industrial cooperation and benefit sharing, and support ethnic regions in fully playing their role in optimizing the layout of regional industrial chains and supply chains and in advancing the development of a unified national market. The relevant departments under the State Council and local people’s governments at or above the county level shall support ethnic regions in, on the basis of their resource endowments and by utilizing modern science and technology, developing agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishery, as well as agricultural and sideline product processing, textile, cultural tourism, and other characteristic and superior industries, including traditional crafts and traditional medicine; developing and strengthening new types of rural collective economies; and advancing comprehensive rural revitalization and integrated urban-rural development.” These provisions are highly consistent in spirit and substance with Article 1 of the *Declaration on the Right to Development*, which provides that “ the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy

economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized” [55], and with Article 2 of the said *Declaration*, which provides that “ the human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development. While recognizing the need to respect fully all human rights and fundamental freedoms and their obligations to society, all human persons, individually and collectively, are responsible for development, a responsibility that in itself ensures the free and full realization of human aspirations, and they should therefore promote and protect an appropriate political, social and economic order for development. States have the right and the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom.” [56]

(II) Highly Consistent with the Principles of International Human Rights Instruments and Standards on Safeguarding Social Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 22 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “People’s governments at or above the county level shall make overall plans for economic and social development planning and the allocation of

public resources, promote the construction of integrated community environments, and improve the social conditions for people of all ethnic groups to live together, study together, jointly build and share, and work together and enjoy together.” Article 23 provides: “Improve friendly, inclusive, and integrative policy measures for urban ethnic work in light of local conditions.” Article 37 provides: “The relevant departments under the State Council and local people’s governments at or above the county level shall promote the rational allocation of public service resources in such areas as employment, education, and medical care, enhance the balance and accessibility of basic public services, promote the coordinated development of education of various types and at various levels in ethnic regions, and improve the capacity of ethnic regions to guarantee public services.” These provisions are highly consistent with Article 8 of the *Declaration on the Right to Development*, which provides that “States should undertake, at the national level, all necessary measures for the realization of the right to development and shall ensure, inter alia, equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income. Effective measures should be taken to ensure that women have an active role in the development process. Appropriate economic and social reforms should be carried out with

a view to eradicating all social injustices. States should encourage popular participation in all spheres as an important factor in development and in the full realization of all human rights.”^[57]

Article 24 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “People’s governments at or above the county level shall strengthen the joint construction of service platforms and the sharing of information concerning population mobility between ethnic regions and between ethnic regions and other regions, enhance coordination capacity, and raise the level of facilitation in cross-regional government services.” Article 25 provides: “People’s governments at or above the county level shall, in accordance with law, protect the lawful rights and interests of citizens who are employed or start businesses across regions between ethnic regions and between ethnic regions and other regions.” These provisions, which safeguard the social rights of ethnic minorities to better integrate into cities, enjoy freedom of mobility and employment, and have access to equal services, are highly consistent in essence with Article 6 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, which provides that “The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right. The steps to be taken by a State Party to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include technical and

vocational guidance and training programmes, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms to the individual.” [58]

Article 59 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “Where any organization or individual, on grounds of ethnic identity, commits employment discrimination, refuses to provide commodities or services, or commits other discriminatory acts prohibited by laws and regulations, the relevant departments in charge, such as the ethnic affairs, human resources and social security, and market regulation departments at or above the county level, shall, in accordance with their respective functions, order the rectification of such acts; where adverse consequences or effects have resulted, a warning or a circular of criticism shall be given. Where laws and regulations provide otherwise for penalties, such provisions shall apply.” These provisions, which safeguard ethnic minorities against discrimination, are highly consistent with Article 5 of the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, which provides that “the States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law...” [59]

Article 40 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “The state protects the

freedom of marriage of citizens. No organization or individual shall, on grounds of ethnic identity, customs and habits, religious belief, or the like, interfere with the freedom of marriage.” This provision, which guarantees the equal marital rights of citizens of all ethnic groups, including ethnic minorities, is highly consistent in substance with Article 16 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which provides that “Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution” ^[60]; with Article 23(3) of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, which provides that “No marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses” ^[61]; with Article 10 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, which provides that “Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses” ^[62]; and with Article 5 of the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, which provides that “States Parties undertake ... in particular ... the right to marry and to choose one’s spouse”^[63].

(III) Highly Consistent with the Rules of International Human Rights Instruments and Standards on Safeguarding Cultural Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 15 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “The state respects and

guarantees the learning and use of the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities, promotes the standardization, systematization, and informatization of the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities, and supports the protection, collation, research, and utilization of ancient books of ethnic minorities.” Article 29 provides: “The state enhances mutual appreciation and integration of the cultures of all ethnic groups, and encourages all ethnic groups to appreciate each other's fine traditional cultures and to learn each other's spoken and written languages.” These provisions, which safeguard the rights of ethnic minorities to learn, use, and develop their own spoken and written languages and cultures, are highly consistent in thought with the provisions of Article 2 of the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, which provides that “persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination” ^[64]; with the provisions of Section I, Article 19 of the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, which provides that “Considering the importance of promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to minorities and contributing to the political and social stability of the States in which they live, the World Conference on Human Rights reaffirms the obligation of States to ensure

that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law in accordance with the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. The persons belonging to minorities have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion and to use their own language in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination”^[65]; with the provisions of Part I, Article 29 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which provides that “ States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: ... the development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own”^[66]; and with the provisions of Article 1 of the *UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education*, which provides that “Discrimination” includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education”^[67].

(IV) Highly Consistent with the Provisions of International Human Rights Instruments and Standards on Safeguarding Civil

Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 5 of the *Promotion Law* provides: “All citizens of the People’s Republic of China are equal before the law. All ethnic groups of the People’s Republic of China are equal. Discrimination and oppression against any ethnic group are prohibited.” Article 9 provides: “The state adheres to governing ethnic affairs in accordance with law, protects the lawful rights and interests of people of all ethnic groups in accordance with law, strengthens the publicity and education of the *Constitution* and laws, enhances the sense of statehood, citizenship, and rule of law among people of all ethnic groups, upholds the unity, dignity, and authority of the socialist rule of law, and advances the modernization of the system and capacity for governance of ethnic affairs on the track of the rule of law.” Article 31 provides: “No organization or individual shall produce or disseminate information containing ethnic hatred, ethnic discrimination, or other content that undermines ethnic unity and progress, by means of text, images, audio, or video.” Article 60 provides: “Social organizations, enterprises, public institutions, and other social organizations shall promptly stop acts occurring within their respective organizations that undermine ethnic unity and progress; where such acts are not stopped in a timely manner and adverse consequences or effects have resulted, the competent authorities at a higher level or the relevant departments in charge shall issue a warning or a circular of criticism, and shall investigate

and affix legal liability on the directly responsible persons in charge and other directly responsible persons in accordance with law.” These provisions safeguarding equal rights are highly consistent in essence with the provisions of Article 2 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which provides that “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty” ^[68]; with the provisions of Article 20(2) of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, which provides that “Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law” ^[69]; with the provisions of Article 6 of the *Declaration on the Right to Development*, which provides that “All States should co-operate with a view to promoting, encouraging and strengthening universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without any distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. All human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent; equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the implementation, promotion and

protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. States should take steps to eliminate obstacles to development resulting from failure to observe civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights”^[70]; with the provisions of Article 1(1) of the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, which provides that “In this Convention, the term ‘racial discrimination’ shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. Special measures taken for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals requiring such protection as may be necessary in order to ensure such groups or individuals equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms shall not be deemed racial discrimination, provided, however, that such measures do not, as a consequence, lead to the maintenance of separate rights for different racial groups and that they shall not be continued after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved”^[71]; with the provisions of Article 4(1) of the *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*, which provides that “All States shall take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination

on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life”^[72]; with the provisions of the Preamble of the *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, which emphasizes that “all members of the international community shall fulfil, jointly and separately, their solemn obligation to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinctions of any kind including distinctions based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, and reaffirming the urgent need to achieve international cooperation in accordance with the *Charter* to fulfil this obligation”^[73]; with the provisions of Article 2(1) of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which provides that “States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present *Convention* to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status”^[74]; and with the provisions of Article 7 of Part II of the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*, which provides that “States

Parties undertake, in accordance with the international instruments concerning human rights, to respect and to ensure to all migrant workers and members of their families within their territory or subject to their jurisdiction the rights provided for in the present *Convention* without distinction of any kind such as to sex, race, colour, language, religion or conviction, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, economic position, property, marital status, birth or other status” [75].

(V) Highly Consistent with the Norms of International Human Rights Instruments and Standards on Safeguarding Political Rights of Ethnic Minorities

The Preamble to the Promotion Law states: “Ensure that all ethnic groups truly obtain equal political rights and jointly become masters of the country.” Article 8 stipulates: “The State upholds and improves the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and safeguards national unity and ethnic solidarity. ” Article 49 stipulates: “The State shall strengthen the development of the contingent of cadres in ethnic regions, and attach importance to the training and employment of cadres from ethnic minorities. The State supports the cultivation of specialized technical personnel and highly skilled personnel in ethnic regions... ” These provisions are, in their essential nature, highly consistent with the provisions of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*

[76]namely, the Preamble, which “Recognizing that, in accordance with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the ideal of free human beings enjoying civil and political freedom and freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his civil and political rights, as well as his economic, social and cultural rights”; Article 2, paragraph 1, which provides that “Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present *Covenant*, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” ; and Article 3, which provides that “The States Parties to the present *Covenant* undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present *Covenant*” —as well as with the provisions of the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, Section I, paragraph 2, which states that “All peoples have the right freely to determine their political status, and freely to pursue their economic, social and cultural development”^[77].

(VI) Highly Consistent with the Requirements of International Human Rights Instruments and Standards on Safeguarding Environmental Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Article 4 of the *Promotion Law* provides for “jointly safeguarding the ecological homeland where humanity and nature coexist in harmony.”

Article 38 provides: “The relevant departments under the State Council and local people's governments at or above the county level shall make overall plans for the optimization of spatial layouts for agriculture, ecology, urban development, and other categories, strengthen the protection of the ecological environment and the sustainable utilization of natural resources in ethnic regions, and guide people of all ethnic groups to jointly safeguard the ecological space for the sustainable development of the Chinese nation.”

These provisions for safeguarding the environmental rights of ethnic minorities are highly consistent in spirit and substance with the provisions of Article 1(2) of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, which provides that “All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence” ^[78]; with the provisions of Article 8 of the *World Charter for Nature*, which provides that “In formulating long-term plans for economic development, population growth and the improvement of living standards, due account shall be taken of the long-term capacity of natural systems to ensure the subsistence and settlement of the populations concerned, it being recognized that this capacity may be enhanced through science and technology” ^[79]; with the objective set forth in Article 2 of the *United*

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which provides for “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner”^[80]; and with the provisions of Article 5 and Article 11 of *Human Rights and the Ocean: A Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment*, which respectively “call upon States to establish, maintain and strengthen effective legal and institutional frameworks to regulate the activities of public and private actors with a view to preventing, reducing and remedying harm to biodiversity and ecosystems, taking into account human rights obligations and commitments relating to the enjoyment of a clean, healthy and sustainable environment” and “call upon all States to conserve, protect and restore healthy ecosystems and biodiversity, and to ensure their sustainable management and use, which requires a human rights-based approach emphasizing participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability in natural resource management.”^[81].

Conclusion

The enactment by China of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress* constitutes a major legislative

practice in consolidating and developing socialist ethnic relations, advancing the rule-of-law based safeguarding of equal rights of ethnic minorities, and fulfilling international human rights instruments and standards. It manifests the resolute commitment of a responsible major country to translating international commitments into domestic rule-of-law actions. As a legitimate legislative act of a sovereign state, it falls within the purview of China's internal affairs and is not subject to interference by any external force.

With the implementation of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress*, China will, with greater intensity and more tangible measures, safeguard and develop equal rights of ethnic minorities, promote higher-quality development of all ethnic groups within the framework of the rule of law, and continuously advance the well-rounded development of all individuals. This law will undoubtedly establish a new milestone in the rule of law in the course of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and will also provide the international community, particularly the countries of the Global South, with China's wisdom, experience, and solutions for safeguarding and developing the equal rights of ethnic minorities and promoting their prosperity and development.

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